(c) and (d) The Government has been taking a number of steps to control the prices of essential commodities. Apart from certain long term measures to increase the production of essential commodities, imports of commodities which are in short supply are encouraged to augment the availability of these items. Some of the commodities are also supplied through the Public Distribution System and Cooperative Stores at prices which are below market levels. Stringent actions are being taken against hoarders and black marketeers and others indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act by the State/UT Governments.

Project on Street Children

1060. SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have examined any project on street children with a view to educate and rehabilitate them;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the stage at which the project stands at present?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) to (c) The Scheme for Welfare of Street Children is an ongoing programme of the Government which aims to provide integrated community based non-institutional basic services for the care, protection and development of Street Children facing destitution, neglect, abuse and exploitation. Under the Scheme Grants in aid upto 90% of the cost of the project are provided to Non-Governmental Organisations for establishing projects for 300 Street Children each. The essential components of each Project include provision of nutrition, literacy, vocational training, counselling and preventive health services to Street Children. The Scheme is currently being implemented in 23 cities of the country.

Cultivation of Black Pepper

1061. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to increase the cultivation of black pepper;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any research has been made on "Silt Wilt" which is affecting the black pepper cultivation; and

(d) if so, the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of India is implementing a scheme on integrated programme for development of spices at an outlay of Rs. 1123.75 lakhs for black pepper development during the year 1997-98. The scheme includes programmes on production and distribution of quality planting material, rehabilitation of old pepper gardens, adoption of plant protection measures and transfer of technology through demonstration etc.

(c) and (d) There is no Silt-Wilt disease in black pepper. However, there is a slow wild disease affecting black pepper. The research findings have suggested following control measures:

(I) Selective application of Phorate @ 30 gram/ Vine twice a year reduce the disease severely.

(II) Application of Neem Cake @ 1 Kg/Vine also improves the health of the Vine, continuous application of organics would reduce the pathogen population.

(III) Raising of a hygienic nursery ensuring disease free rooted cuttings is the recommended strategy.

(IV) For *Phytophthora Capsici* drenching the base of the pepper vines with cooper Oxychloride (0.2%) during pre- and Post-Monsoon period is recommended to reduce the disease.

(V) Foliar spraying with Bordeaux mixture (1%) to check foliar infection caused by *P. Capsici* is also recommended.

Installation of Bore Wells and Hand-Pumps in Tamil Nadu

1062. SHRI P. SHANMUGAM : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: